

PUBLIC SCHOOL TEACHERS' SALARIES IN UPPER SECONDARY EDUCATION

Key Findings: England, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Scotland, United States

Among the G8 countries reporting data, the United States in 2001 paid the second-highest starting salary (\$28,806) to public upper secondary teachers with the minimum qualifications required. Only Germany reported a higher average starting salary (\$43,100).

International comparisons of public secondary school teachers' salaries can give policymakers an idea of how teacher compensation varies across countries. This indicator compares average salaries for both public upper secondary school teachers with the minimum qualifications required *and* those with the minimum qualification and 15 years of experience in these seven countries in 2001. It also compares the ratio of these average salaries to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita for each of these countries in 2001.

Among the nations reporting data for 2001, the United States paid the second-highest average starting salary (\$28,806) to public upper secondary school teachers with the minimum qualifications required (figure 19a). Only Germany reported a higher average starting salary (\$43,100) for public upper secondary school teachers with the minimum qualifications.

Among the seven countries reporting, the United States paid the third-highest average salary (\$41,708) to public upper secondary school teachers with the minimum qualifications and 15 years of experience in 2001. Germany and Japan reported higher average public upper secondary salaries for teachers at this level of experience (\$52,839 and \$43,069, respectively). The average salary for such teachers in the United States was 32 percent higher than the salary for public upper secondary teachers at this level in France (\$31,507), the G8 country reporting the lowest average salary for teachers at this level.

Comparing teacher salaries to GDP per capita is a way to assess the relative value of teachers' salaries among countries. In 2001, starting public upper secondary teachers with the minimum qualifications in six of the countries presented earned less than the average per capita GDP in their respective countries (figure 19b). For example, in the United States, starting public upper secondary teachers with the minimum qualifications earned, on average, 82 percent of the U.S. GDP per capita. In Germany, however, public upper secondary teachers with minimum qualifications earned 162 percent of the German GDP. But in all the countries reporting data, public upper secondary school teachers with minimum qualifications and 15 years' experience earned, on average, higher than the GDP per capita in their respective countries.

Definitions and Methodology

School teachers refers to professional personnel directly involved in teaching students. This classification includes classroom teachers, special education teachers, and department chairpersons whose duties include some teaching, but excludes teachers' aides and teaching/research assistants.

Annual statutory teachers' salaries in public upper secondary schools are in equivalent U.S. dollars, converted using Purchasing Power Parity indices (PPPs) that equalize the purchasing power of different currencies. PPPs exchange rate data are from the OECD National Accounts 2001. Statutory salaries refer to scheduled salaries according to official pay scales. The salaries reported are defined as gross salaries (total sum paid by the employer for the labor supplied) excluding the employer's contribution to social security and pension (according to existing salary scales), and are "before tax."

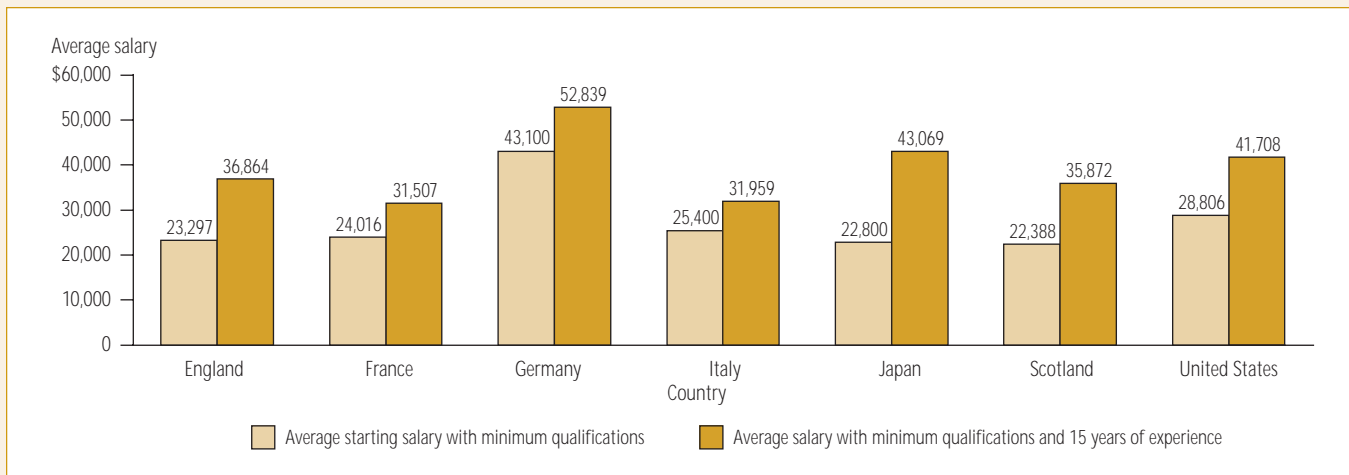
Salaries after 15 years' experience refer to the scheduled annual salary of a full-time classroom teacher with the minimum training necessary to be fully qualified and with 15 years' experience. Minimum qualifications vary by country. In the United States,

teacher qualifications are decentralized and vary by state. In most states teachers must have a bachelor's degree, pass state licensure exams, and undergo a criminal background check in order to obtain a license. For more information on the teacher qualifications required in other G8 countries, please see http://www.oecd.org/document/9/0,2340,en_2649_201185_1839497_1_1_1_1,00.html.

In countries with centralized systems of education, there are typically national salary schedules. In countries like the United States, with decentralized educational systems, local or regional governments establish their own salary schedules. Estimates of national salary schedules in the United States were derived from the Schools and Staffing Survey for 1999–2000, with adjustments for inflation for 2000–01.

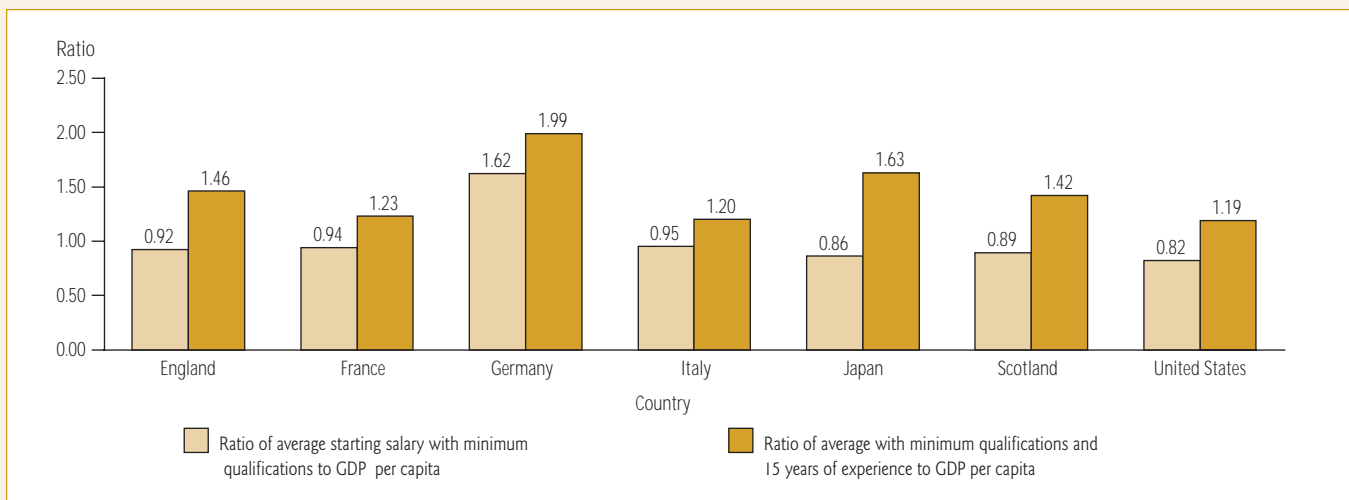
GDP per capita is in equivalent U.S. dollars, calendar year 2001. GDP per capita in national currencies (2001) are converted to U.S. dollars using PPPs (2001), total population (2001), and total GDP current expenditure (2001).

Figure 19a. Public upper secondary teachers' average salaries in U.S. dollars converted using Purchasing Power Parities (PPPs), by teacher qualifications and experience and country: 2001



NOTE: Average salaries are gross salaries (i.e., before deductions for income taxes), and are converted to U.S. dollars using 2001 national Purchasing Power Parities (PPPs) exchange rate data.
SOURCE: Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). 2003. *Education at a Glance: OECD Indicators 2003*, Table D5.1.

Figure 19b. Ratio of average salary for public upper secondary teachers to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita, by level of teacher qualifications and experience and country: 2001



NOTE: Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita is in equivalent U.S. dollars, calendar year 2001. GDP per capita in national currencies (2001) are converted to U.S. dollars using PPPs (2001), total population (2001), and total GDP current expenditure (2001). A ratio of 1.0 indicates that the salary is equal to the GDP per capita for that country.

SOURCE: Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). 2003. *Education at a Glance: OECD Indicators 2003*, Table D5.1.